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Washington, D. C. 20505

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7 AUG 1985

MEMORANDUM FOR: Subgroup on Nuclear Export Coordination

FROM:

[Redacted]

Acting Director of Scientific and Weapons Research

SUBJECT:

Overview of Iran's Renewed Efforts  
for Nuclear Development [Redacted]

1. The attached memorandum provides an overview of Iran's renewed efforts for nuclear development. It discusses Iran's nuclear research program, the status of work associated with completing Iran's Bushehr-I nuclear power reactor, and the prospects for nuclear weapons development in Iran. [Redacted]

2. If you have any questions concerning the attached memorandum, please feel free to contact [Redacted]

[Redacted]

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**SUBJECT: Overview of Iran's Renewed Efforts for  
Nuclear Development**

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OSWR/NED/NPB, [redacted] (7 Aug 85)

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## DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

5 August 1985

## OVERVIEW OF IRAN'S RENEWED EFFORTS FOR NUCLEAR DEVELOPMENT

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Summary

In 1982, the Islamic Government of Iran reversed its decision to abandon the Shah's ambitious nuclear program. The direction of Iran's current program suggests that Iran is attempting to implement plans organized under the Shah that included developing a nuclear fuel cycle to support a nuclear research and power reactor program. Iran is a party to the Treaty on the Nonproliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and there is no evidence that Iran is resuming nuclear research to develop nuclear weapons. Even if they were to renounce the NPT, we believe that Iran will not have the technology needed to recover plutonium for a nuclear weapon within at least the next ten years.

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Background

The Government of Iran's 1982 decision to reinstitute the Shah's nuclear program was in part due to the personal ambitions of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran's (AEOI) two principle leaders, Reza Amrollahi, Director General of the AEOI and Cyrus Amer-Tusi, Special Consultant. The decision was

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This memorandum was requested by the Subaroud on Nuclear Export Coordination.

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It was prepared by [redacted] Nuclear Energy Division, Office of Scientific and Weapons Research and was coordinated with the Office of Near East/South Asia Analysis, Global Issues, East Asian Analysis, European Analysis, African and Latin American Analysis, and reviewed by the National Intelligence Officer-at-Large. Comments and queries may be directed to the Chief, Nuclear Energy Division, OSWR, [redacted]

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Copy 34 of 46

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also based on Iran's interest in utilizing nuclear energy to meet domestic electricity needs and on the Islamic Government's conclusion that to do otherwise would waste the large amount of money already invested in constructing nuclear laboratories and nuclear power reactors.

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We do not expect Iran to have significant manpower problems in resuming its nuclear program. Even though highly qualified personnel working in the Shah's ambitious program left during the Islamic revolution in 1979, several fairly competent professionals apparently remained and are now working in the nuclear program. In order to upgrade their personnel, the Atomic Energy

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[REDACTED]

Iran, however, is having and probably will continue to have chronic problems in obtaining enriched uranium fuel for its US-supplied research reactor at the NRC. Since early 1983, Iran has been trying to buy fuel for the reactor directly from West European supplier countries and through the IAEA. To date, Iran has not found a willing supplier. Iran probably will be forced to shut down the reactor if it does not obtain fuel by the end of this year. This will impede their progress in areas of reactor design and operation as well as training personnel. [REDACTED]

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### Prospects for Nuclear Weapons

Iran has signed the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty and we have no evidence of an Iranian nuclear weapons program. We believe that Iran may at some future date be motivated to become a nuclear weapons power for reasons of prestige as well as regional security. However, Iran would need a reactor that could provide it with enough fissile material (i.e. plutonium) for a nuclear weapon and a reprocessing facility to separate the plutonium from spent reactor fuel. If the Bushehr-I reactor can be completed and operated, plutonium will be produced. The diversion of this plutonium however, would be a violation of international safeguards that apply to the reactor, even if Iran were to withdraw from the NPT. We speculate that Iran's indigenous reactor development effort could eventually lead to construction of a suitable plutonium production reactor, but not before the turn of the century. Even so, it will also be difficult for Iran to acquire the reprocessing technology necessary to recover any plutonium produced because of nuclear supplier controls that apply to the export of such technology. And we do not believe that Iran could indigenously develop this technology over the next ten years. [REDACTED]

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3  
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